been sanctioned. The special package covers house boat owners, hotels/ guest houses, shikara owners and ponywalas.

Hon'ble Prime Minister has also announced a special Reconstruction Plan for tourism in J & K during November 2004. It includes setting up of 50 tourist villages; financial support for 12 tourism development authorities, establishment of new tourist circuit, assistance to travel agents,training to tourism industry personnel and developing skills of youth in tourism industry by Institute of Hotel Management, Srinagar.

A number of projects have been taken up to build up infrastructure in the State. The Institute of Sking & Mountaineering, Gulmarg has been revived and a new building is being constructed. A new building for the Institute of Hotel Management, Srinagar is also being constructed with Central assistance. A Pilgrimage Circuit for Amarnath and Hazratbal Shrine has been sanctioned.A tourist complex at Bachhan Depot, Jammu has been sanctioned. A number of projects for rural tourism, capacity building and new circuits, as also promotion and publicity, are planned for the year 2005-06. The State Government has also taken a number of measures to promote tourism in the State like designating tourism as a priority sector; adopting a two pronged strategy of capacity building and promotion of tourism; enhancing its presence in a large number of events, conferences and conventions on tourism held within and outside the country; encouraging tourists from South Asia, East Asia, Central Asia and Middle East; and bringing out multi-lingual literature about the State and its distribution through State Tourism offices within the country and through Government of India offices abroad.

(d) Does not arise.

Conference of District Magistrates/Collectors

*445. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hon'ble Prime Minister is planning to convene a Conference of District Magistrates/Collectors with a view to giving impetus to various Central Schemes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government had received objections to the said proposal from various corners; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) It is not the Ministry of Panchayati Raj but the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions that is planning to convene a Conference of selected District Collectors to focus on the issue of governance at District level and to speed up the delivery of public services. The Conference is expected to be addressed by the Prime Minister and would result in a plan of action for improving the delivery system. As a prelude to the Conference, 8 regional workshops are being held at different training institutes. The Administrative Ministries concerned have been requested to prepare theme papers and also nominate a coordinator for attending the workshops and preparing a final report for discussion in the National Conference.

(c) and (d) No objections have been received by the Government to the above proposal.

Income tax exemption to private hospitals

*446. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the existing law, private hospitals get huge amount of income tax exemption for incurring expenses on medical research activities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount of tax exemption granted to such hospitals during the last three years in the four metropolitan cities in India, year-wise and hospital-wise together with the details of research conducted?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Under section 35 of the Income Tax Act, 1961, a private hospital is eligible to claim deduction on account of expenditure incurred on medical research activity.

(c) The Income Tax Department does not maintain data of deductions allowed on account of claims of the tax payers under the relevant provisions of the Act. It is, therefore, not feasible to furnish information in respect of private hospitals with regard to the deductions claimed by them u/s 35 of the Act, in respect of expenditure incurred on medical research activity.